

PRIMITIVE MAN

QUARTERLY BULLETIN

OF THE

CATHOLIC ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONFERENCE

Vol. II, Nos. 3 and 4

Washington, D. C., U. S. A.

July and October, 1929

RELIGIOUS ORIGINS NUMBER

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THE ORIGIN AND EARLY HISTORY OF RELIGION

a. Definitions and Divisions

RELIGION and magic have been defined in many different ways, and much ink has been spilt over the definitions. The long controversies over these definitions have to no small extent been wars about words. In the present paper we shall waive the lexicographical issue and shall use the two terms, merely for the sake of convenience, to denote two great related but contrasting swarms of facts.

Men may and do take two major attitudes toward the supernatural world: the attitude of persuasion, petition, or propitiation, and the attitude of coercion, constraint, or compulsion. In many rites and observances it is not possible for us to make out plainly which of the two attitudes is present or dominant. In others, the two attitudes coexist side by side, or blend one into the other. In still others, one or other of the two attitudes is clearly the sole or dominant one.

In the present paper we shall use the term religion to denote those activities that are characterized by a persuasive or propitiatory attitude toward the sup-

ernatural world, and the term magic to denote those activities that are characterized by a coercive or compulsive attitude toward the supernatural world. Again, for clearness' sake only and for want of a better word, we shall use the term superhumanism to embrace both religious and magical activities.

In the senses here adopted, both religion and magic contain three elements—an intellectual one, an emotional one, and a volitional one. On their intellectual side, both imply or include a faith or belief, a philosophy or science. This philosophy or science may be very vague and crude and inconsistent, or may be very clear-cut and refined and logical, but in all cases there exists some theory of proximate or ultimate causes or processes. On their emotional side, religion and magic share in common a certain awe or reverence or fear or affection toward the beings or forces with which they deal, an emotional stirring or "thrill" that is absent from purely natural and secular activities: On their volitional side, both religion and magic include a practical or conative attitude toward supernatural beings or forces, or both, but this attitude differs as noted above, that of religion being persuasive, that of magic being compulsive. This analysis perhaps over-simplifies the complex phenomena of religion and magic, but, so far as it goes, it remains true to the facts we are describing.

Religion and magic as here defined are not identical with philosophy or science. They have in common with philosophy and science a theory of ultimate and proximate causes and processes, but they have something over and above what a philosophy or science has. A clear-cut belief even in a Supreme Being who is the maker of all things, the benevolent ruler of the universe, and the moral lawgiver, falls short of being a religion and remains a sterile philosophy unless there be present emotional and volitional attitudes toward this Supreme Being on the part of the believer. An undoubting conviction that the north wind is a spirit or is controlled by one, or building a snow man to bring cold weather, falls short of being religion or magic and remains a bit of erroneous theoretic or applied science, unless similar emotional and volitional attitudes accompany the belief or act. It is hardly necessary to add that magic, in the sense we are using it, is something quite different from sleight-of-hand, although tricks of legerdemain are very commonly part of the stock in trade of professional or amateur witch doctors and shamans.

So much for definitions and distinctions. A few words must now be appended upon the various subdivisions of religion and magic.

Religious activities may be divided in many ways. For our present purpose they are probably best classified in accordance with the various classes of supernatural beings who are supplicated or propitiated. These beings may be divided into four major classes: Ghosts, or beings who once lived on earth as human beings; spirits, or lesser beings who were never men; gods, that is, ghosts or spirits who enjoy a certain marked eminence among their supernatural fellows; the Supreme Being, God, who stands alone and supreme, or a near-Supreme Being, who easily ranks first and foremost in the supernatural world.

In accordance with this fourfold classification of supernatural beings, we have four great types of religion; Manism, or the worship of ghosts or ancestors; animism, or the worship of spirits; polytheism, or the worship of gods; monotheism, or the worship of the Supreme Being.

Monotheism in its strict sense is the worship of a Supreme Being conceived of as the sole creator and supreme master of the universe. It excludes and is "intolerant" of belief in and worship of beings or forces thought to be more or less independent in origin or power of the Supreme Being. In ethical monotheism, the Supreme Being is also the author and upholder of the moral law. Among many peoples, primitive and civilized, the Supreme Being is conceived of rather as a quasi-Supreme Being or a near-Supreme Being, one who is in a general way the maker of the universe but not necessarily of all beings or things in it; worship of him is not exclusive, but is instead both in theory and in practice quite "tolerant" of magical, manistic and animistic rites and observances; his relation to the moral law, either as author or upholder, is often so slight as to be practically non-operative or non-existent. To these various modifications and attenuations of strict monotheism or ethical monotheism we shall in the present paper give the name of theism.

Some students of culture origins would perhaps take exception to some of the above uses of terms. We are, however, here using these words merely for the sake of clearness and convenience, to give to certain significant groups of facts a local habitation and a name. The facts are the important things. The words we use are of secondary moment, except to the lexicographer, and even he allows us certain liberties where, as in the present case, literary and technical usage is not rigidly crystallized.

The word "spirit," as employed above, should not be interpreted too literally. Most "spirits," and, for that matter, most ghosts, gods, and Supreme or near-Supreme Beings, are not conceived of as being purely spiritual and incorporeal. Most of them are supposed to have some kind of a body or corporeal part. This body may be gross and ponderable and palpable, like our own bodies, or it may be tenuous and light and wraith-like, but more commonly "spirits" are not utterly incorporeal.

Magical activities are variously divided—into imitative and contagious, positive and negative, public and private, "black" and "white," and so forth. Into these divisions it is not necessary for us to enter in detail. We shall here deal with magical practices as a whole.

Some word of explanation may, however, be in order regarding the concept of *mana* that has bulked so large since the beginning of the present century in discussions on the origin and early history of religion. The word itself, like the first important description of the concept, comes to us from Melanesia. The general concept it embodies is, however, found in many other parts of the world. The concept differs considerably in details from people to people, and is in many respects vague, elusive, and nebulous, not to say contradictory and inconsistent. But, if we pare off these nebulosities, inconsistencies and local dif-

ferences, the core idea in *mana* and kindred conceptions seems to be that of a more or less impersonal mystic energy, a sort of preternatural immaterial dynamic power that attaches to things or can be appropriated by beings, and that produces effects beyond the ordinary limits of natural processes and of human powers. The *mana* concept in its varying local forms looks very much like a rude, inchoate and none too clear or consistent attempt on the part of primitive metaphysicians and scientists to work out a rational explanation of how magic really produces its preternatural effects. The concept is very widespread, but we have no evidence that it is or ever was universally held. In the present paper we shall take the liberty of dealing no further with it, but shall confine our attention to magic as such.

The division we have adopted of the bewilderingly complicated and shifting phenomena of superhumanism may be put schematically as follows: -

Superhumanism

Religion

Manism

Animism

Polytheism

Monotheism (Theism)

Magic

And now, having defined and divided these major types of superhumanism, we may proceed to outline in a general way their respective distributions over the world.

b. The Facts: Distribution

From the abundant factual evidence at hand, we can say with all confidence that superhumanism is an absolutely universal phenomenon. Every tribe or people that has ever been discovered has some form of it.

We can with practically equal confidence go farther and say that both religion and magic are of universal distribution. Often it is difficult to determine whether in a given rite or series of rites the magical or the religious attitude is the sole or dominant one. A clear case, however, of a tribe lacking all traces of magic has still to be found. And the same may be said of religion.

Sometimes, for instance, the Australians are cited as religionless magicians. It is seemingly true that over most of Australia the magical rather than the religious attitude is the dominant one. But the former is far from being the sole and exclusive one. We shall, for want of space, give just one illustration of religion proper in Australia—from the Euahlayi tribe, of New South Wales. The Euahlayi believe in a Supreme Being, Byamee. "Prayers for the souls of the dead used to be addressed to Byamee at funerals. . . . Byamee is supposed to listen to the cry of an orphan for rain. . . . At some initiatory rites the oldest medicine man, or Wirreenun, present addresses a prayer to Byamee, asking him to give them long life, as they have kept his law" (Parker, *The Euahlayi tribe*, 8, cf. 79-80). Even among the Arunta of Central Aus-

tralia, Spencer and Gillen, who with Strehlow are our chief authorities for this central area, while assuring us that the performance of the elaborate Intichiuma ceremonies "is not associated in the native mind with the idea of appealing to the assistance of any supernatural being," have nevertheless given us numerous details of both positive and negative propitiatory practices towards both departed souls and ancestral spirits believed in and feared or cherished by the natives (Native tribes of Central Australia, 170, 498, 510, 516, 521; cf. also Strehlow, *Die Aranda- und Loritja Staemme*, III, i, 8-9).

Animism and manism are universal or nearly universal, although differing widely in relative importance from region to region. Manism is, for instance, of major, though not exclusive, importance in aboriginal central African religion. It is found, in traces at least, over all or most of the American continent but, on the whole, animism seems to have struck much deeper root than has manism in American Indian religious practices. Polytheism is often with difficulty distinguishable from manism and animism, there being no sharp line dividing it from these latter. It is very common, covering most of the world, but is apparently not universal.

Belief in a Supreme or near-Supreme Being—who may be anything from a strictly monotheistic creator, benevolent ruler, and moral lawgiver, to a very shadowy, distant, non-resident deity, little if at all concerned with human affairs—is very widespread. It is found among two-thirds to three-quarters or perhaps even more of the uncivilized peoples of the world. It is not, however, universal. At least, a considerable number of tribes and peoples who have been long and sympathetically studied by thoroughly equipped missionaries and ethnologists are definitely reported as lacking any notion of a Supreme or even near-Supreme Being. Negatives are notoriously unreliable in this particular field of supreme-being beliefs, but it is highly improbable that so many of our best and most sympathetic observers should be utterly mistaken.

The Supreme Being is commonly, but not always, regarded as the creator or fashioner of the world and of men. He is often, but by no means always, looked upon as the author and upholder of the moral law. Not infrequently, in fact, the Supreme Being, while conceived of as the maker of the world and the benevolent ruler of all things, is thought to be interested chiefly in men's ritual observances toward him, and only mildly or not at all in their social and moral obligations toward one another. In practically all cases, however, the Supreme Being is regarded as in the main benevolently inclined toward men or at least as not malevolently inclined. Very commonly, indeed, he is looked upon as so benevolently inclined that prayer or other worship is considered quite superfluous or else he is appealed to only in the gravest and rarest emergencies. In many cases, where there exists a fairly clear concept of a Supreme Being, no cult to speak of is paid him, except the tenuous negative cult of not showing him irreverence in word or deed. In many of these cases, he is thought to have no very active interest in mankind—and mankind reciprocates. In such instances, belief in the Supreme Being remains almost entirely within the field

of the philosophical and speculative, with only an infinitesimal dash of the religious proper.

On the other hand, among a great many uncivilized tribes and peoples, worship, supplication, and propitiation of a very clearly conceived Supreme or near-Supreme Being holds the premier place in the religious consciousness and rites of these tribes and peoples, or at any rate stands out quite prominently in their religious life. Rarely, or never, however, do we find a pure and exclusive ethical monotheism, a monotheism that zealously and jealously bars out and frowns upon the practice of magic and the worship, supplication and propitiation of ghosts and animistic spirits. In practically every instance, alongside of theism flourishes vigorously and undisturbed some species of manism, animism, or magic, or, as more commonly, of all three.

A pretty fair summary of the case would be this: An exclusive and "intolerant" ethical monotheism is rarely if ever found among uncivilized peoples, but a form of theism or Supreme-Being worship approaching in greater or lesser measure to such monotheism is found very commonly among uncivilized peoples, among at least one-half of them, and perhaps among two-thirds or even more of them.

Before bringing to a close this very condensed and, it is to be feared, very dry and dreary outline of the distribution of magical and religious practices, something must be added upon what may be called their differential distribution.

The uncivilized peoples of the world are far from being homogeneous in the matter either of culture pattern or of level of culture attainment. There is almost as great a difference in level of material culture between, for instance, the hunting nomad Cree of northern Canada and the sedentary agricultural Pueblo of our American Southwest, as there is between pre-Columbian Mexico, Yucatan, or Peru, and contemporary New York. The great bulk of uncivilized peoples possess a fairly advanced and complex material culture. They are capable and intelligent gardeners or herders, or have quite elaborate techniques for hunting and fishing. They are more commonly sedentary or partly so, especially the farming tribes, and live in villages that sometimes contain thousands of souls. Their huts are often very substantially and ingeniously built. Skill in pottery, weaving, metalwork and a score of other practical arts is commonly present, and often skill of a high order. It is in this condition that the great majority of uncivilized peoples live, from Senegal to the South Seas in the Eastern hemisphere and from the Canadian border and Alaska to Chile and Patagonia in the Western.

Scattered, however, here and there over the habitable globe, isolated from the currents of wider intercourse, hidden away in remote jungles and deserts and mountain fastnesses or clinging to the tips of archipelagos and continental land masses, are found a small minority of extremely simple and backward tribes. They are often spoken of as the marginal peoples, on account of both their cultural and their geographical position. They are also referred to sometimes as the lower nomads, though not all of them are nomadic—

nomads, to distinguish them from the sedentary village peoples; lower, to distinguish them from the semi-nomadic herding peoples and from the more advanced 'higher hunters'.

A list of these marginal peoples would include: The three Fuegian tribes—Yahgan, Alacaluf, and Ona—of extreme South America, and some of the eastern Brazilian tribes; many of the negroid pygmies of central Africa, the Andaman Islands, the Malay Peninsula, the Philippines, and perhaps of New Guinea; the negroid Bushmen of South Africa; the caucasoid or australoid Vedda of Ceylon, Sakai of the Malay Peninsula, and Toala of Celebes; the aborigines of Australia and Tasmania. To this list many students would be inclined to add: The far northern Athapascan and Algonkian tribes of Canada, and some of the Californian and neighboring tribes; the sixteenth-century Tehuelche of Patagonia; the Jakun of the Malay Peninsula, the Kubu of Sumatra, and the Punan of Borneo: and a few other scattered groups.

In discussions as to who are the most primitive peoples in the world one frequently comes across the statement that the extinct Tasmanians were the most primitive, with the Australian blacks running as close seconds. That the Tasmanians represented an extremely low and simple culture appears beyond question. That however they represented a culture level lower than that of many an other of the tribes in the foregoing list is very doubtful indeed. As for the Australians, we are suspecting more and more that they are not nearly as primitive in many respects as they used to be thought. Evidence would appear to be accumulating that many things in Australian culture, particularly in central Australian culture, are later and more advanced accretions from without the continent or developments from within it. Much is still *sub judice*, but at any rate the day is long past when the Australians could naively be singled out as the most primitive people of the world. And, it may be added, any theory of religious or social origins built today upon this hardworked and much overworked premise is foredoomed to an early demise and to a memory unwept, unhonored and unsung.

In the following pages we shall use the expression 'marginal peoples' to denote the scattered lower nomad tribes of whom we have been speaking, and the expression 'intramarginal peoples' to denote the more advanced gardening, herding and higher hunting tribes that make up the great bulk, probably ninety-five to ninety-eight per cent, of the uncivilized population of the world. Both great groups, in a general way, are 'marginal' geographically to the more important central or focal civilized areas of the world, the intramarginal peoples usually flanking immediately the civilized ones, the more remote marginal peoples usually flanking in turn the intramarginal ones. The two terms, marginal and intramarginal, as here used, correspond broadly to the older terms, savage and barbarian, respectively. We are avoiding these latter terms because they are apt to be a little misleading unless understood in their more or less technical ethnological sense.

The five chief components of superhumanism—magic on the one hand, and religion, with its four major types, manism, animism, polytheism, and theism, on the other—are widely spread among both the marginal and intramarginal peoples, but not in the same proportions. Important quantitative differences prevail, particularly as regards magic, manism and animism.

We seemingly nowhere find among either the marginal or the intramarginal peoples exclusive ethical monotheism, an ethical monotheism that rigidly bars and is intolerant of all magic, manism, and animism. The nearest approach to pure ethical monotheism among the marginal tribes is apparently the theism recently found by Fathers Gusinde and Koppers among the Fuegians.

How widespread belief in and worship of a Supreme Being or near-Supreme Being is among the marginal peoples cannot be stated with statistical accuracy. Many of them, for example, the extinct Tasmanians, the marginal Brazilian tribes, many or most of the pygmy Negrito bands of Africa, the Philippines, and New Guinea, have never been adequately investigated. In not a few of the other cases, the evidence is far from being as clear and full as would be desired, or as unexceptionable as ethnological technique demands. Nevertheless it seems safe to say that among a good majority, although not all, of the marginal peoples who have been studied, a theism approaching here closely and there remotely to monotheism has been discovered.

As to whether theism is more widely spread among the marginal or among the intramarginal peoples, it is not easy to determine. Comparison has to be made between two vast, tangled masses of very complicated and often very questionable evidence. Probably, however, all things considered, and allowing for the rapidity with which the evidence for theism among the marginal tribes has accumulated in the last decade, the generalization may be tentatively ventured that there is a slightly or appreciably greater amount of theism proportionately among the marginal peoples, especially if we rule out those Australian groups who appear more akin culturally to the intramarginal peoples, than among the intramarginal peoples.

When we turn to the question of the comparative prevalence of magic, manism, and animism among the marginal and among the intramarginal peoples, the answer can be given much more definitely and confidently. Magic, manism, and animism are well nigh universal in both marginal and intramarginal culture. Or, to put it a little more exactly, one or other of the three is found thriving in every known tribe, marginal or intramarginal. But a significant generalization is emerging more and more clearly from our enormous storehouses of facts bearing on primitive superstitions. The generalization is this: Magic, manism, and animism are on the whole much more elaborately developed and much more preponderant and complex among the intramarginal peoples on the whole than among the marginal peoples taken en masse. What Dr. Paul Sarasin said many years ago of one of the marginal peoples, the Toala, that they are "unsophisticated in superstition," can with substantial truth be predicated as a rule of the other marginal peoples.

Ordinarily the marginal peoples are not without a certain dread of ghosts and animistic spirits, but no hordes of truculent ghosts and malignant demons hound them through life as they so commonly hound the intramarginal peoples. The rank jungle-like growth and teeming complexity of magical, manistic and animistic beliefs, practices and observances that are so characteristic of the average intramarginal people are wanting among the average marginal people. Among these latter there appears to prevail a relative simplicity in superstitions, just as there prevails a relative simplicity in most other departments of their culture.

Magic, it is true, runs wild over most of the Australian continent, but here again the question may legitimately be raised as to how far these features of Australian culture hark back to intramarginal influence from without the continent or to cultural advance within it. In all events, among most all the other marginal peoples, magic, while never completely absent, is as a rule but moderately developed, as compared with its astonishingly exuberant flowering among most of the intramarginal peoples.

Broadly speaking, the general rule appears to hold, that the lower one goes down in the scale of material culture the less does he find of the three elements of magic, manism, and animism, which constitute from ninety to ninety-nine per cent of the superhumanism of the intramarginal or more advanced uncivilized peoples of the world.

c. Interpretation of Facts

So far we have been concerned with defining and dividing the facts of superhumanism and with outlining the distribution of the facts over the uncivilized world. We have, in a word, been dealing with facts in two dimensions, as spread over space. Our further problem is that of reconstructing their distribution in time, the problem of deriving three dimensions from two. The problem is not easy. It is not, however, insoluble. It is in many respects similar to the one that confronts the geologist. A detailed account and justification for the technique used would carry us very far afield. We shall here have to content ourselves with a bare outline of methodology, leaving its further and more explicit treatment for some future issue.

In an occasional out-of-the-way marginal area within our own western civilization we may still find in use the ox-drawn wooden cart or the spinning wheel. Many a little rural center within our United States still clings tenaciously to most of the customs and ways of a generation ago, notwithstanding the advent of the auto, the movie, and the radio. Many an outlying village or countryside in the remoter marginal regions of Europe still preserves the essentials of life as it was lived three or five or more centuries ago. In a word, even within the strict geographical limits of our focal occidental culture, cultural changes come about at unequal pace. The marginal areas move more slowly than the intermediate or intramarginal ones, and the intramarginal belts move more slowly than the focal centers. We can learn much of the ways of our

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immediate ancestors by direct observation of the present-day culture traits of the marginal and intramarginal belts in our own occidental culture.

What is happening today within the range of direct vision in our occidental culture, has seemingly happened throughout history and prehistory on a world scale. Cultural change, call it progress or retrogression or whatever we please, is seemingly a perennial accompaniment of human history and prehistory. But the rate of change differs widely from period to period and from people to people. At present in the focal civilized areas of the world, and for that matter in most of the marginal and intramarginal areas, change is going on at an unprecedentedly rapid pace. We are so much a part of this extraordinarily shifting culture and are so inured to rapidity of change that we find it hard to realize that snail-speed rather than airplane-speed is characteristic of the rate of cultural change in most regions throughout most of man's history and prehistory. During most periods of the past, change has been relatively slow, nor has it been uniform. One people or group of peoples has gone forward, while another people or group of peoples in an adjacent region has held fast in larger part to the old ways. And ordinarily it is the marginal and intramarginal peoples and groups that remain stagnant, not absolutely stagnant of course but relatively so, while the focal peoples change.

We possess a vast mass of factual evidence, archeological, ethnological, geographical, historical and proto-historical, and linguistic, pointing unmistakably to the conclusion that with few exceptions the uncivilized peoples of today are not cultural "degenerates," in the sense of being descended from formerly civilized forbears, but instead are more or less stagnated "survivals" from earlier times. They have retained in greater or less measure the culture of an earlier period in human history or prehistory. Furthermore, and the point is of key importance in the reconstruction of prehistoric social and religious development, while the intramarginal peoples have retained in greater or lesser measure the culture of an earlier epoch in the history of the race, the marginal peoples have retained in greater or lesser measure the culture of a still earlier epoch.

Consequently, cultural conditions prevailing *today* among the *intramarginal* peoples may legitimately be appealed to as throwing light upon *the culture of prehistoric* man, and cultural conditions prevailing *today* among the *marginal* peoples may legitimately be appealed to as throwing light upon *the culture of still earlier prehistoric* man.

In connection with these two key principles of reconstruction two important considerations should be emphasized. First, the principles have to be used with the utmost caution and reserve. Secondly, through their use we do indeed get a third dimension from two, a time perspective and chronology from actual distribution in space, but the time perspective and chronology are, unlike the time perspective and chronology of documented history, undated. We obtain succession rather than chronology properly speaking.

An illustration or two of the use of the principle may help to make the technical procedure more clear. Head hunting is consistently absent from the culture of the marginal peoples, except in one very limited locality in the Philippines where the custom has almost certainly been taken over by some of the marginal Negritos of northeast Luzon from their more advanced intramarginal neighbors. The practice is rather widespread among certain sections of the intramarginal peoples of the world. Human sacrifice is consistently absent from the culture of the marginal peoples, is of sporadic occurrence among the intramarginals, and appears to have reached its highest development among some of the focal peoples of archaic civilization. In the case both of head hunting and of human sacrifice we have pretty safe ground for concluding that neither of these cultural amenities belong to remotest prehistoric culture, but that both of them are of relatively late introduction into the stream of man's cultural prehistory.

On the other hand, the family institution and incest taboos are universally present and deeply imbedded in the culture of both the intramarginal and the marginal peoples. We have every reasonable ground then for concluding that these culture traits are not of recent introduction but go back to the earliest period of human prehistory to which we can attain. In like manner, if we find magic and religion, manism and theism widely or uniformly present among both the marginal and the intramarginal peoples, we have good reason to conclude that these culture elements go very far back into the remote prehistory of the race.

By interpreting the facts of contemporary cultural distribution in the light of the two principles enunciated above, we are able to reconstruct in part many of the broad lines of culture history at three chronologically successive levels, the historic, the recent prehistoric, and the remote prehistoric. While we can date with some approach to accuracy the beginnings of the historic level, we cannot date with any accuracy the beginnings of either the recent prehistoric or the remote prehistoric level. And even if we could date these latter beginnings, we should find that the exact dates at which the cultural ancestors of the present intramarginal peoples graduated from the marginal level differed widely, by centuries and millenia, from people to people. Furthermore, neither through the technique we are here proposing nor through any other objective technique in sight can anthropology reach back into and reconstruct absolute cultural beginnings or origins proper, at least so far as religious or magical origins are concerned.

The reconstruction of the triple temporal succession we have indicated is not all that we should desire. But it is something. It enables us to build up some secure foundations, and to tear down a good many cardboard theories. The time scale is undoubtedly a rough and crude one, but, for the prehistory of world culture on the whole, as contrasted with the prehistory of some particular traits or of some particular peoples and regions, it is about as detailed and accurate as we are justified in holding to in the present state of our

evidence. Moreover, even in arriving at this crude reconstruction, we have to use our two principles of interpretation, as noted above, with extreme caution and scrupulous reserve.

Within the last quarter century, two or three elaborate attempts have been made to arrive at a much more detailed and accurate stratification of world culture. The most important of these is the Kulturkreis or Culture Cycle theory. It was first advanced in detail by two Berlin ethnologists, Graebner and Ankermann, in 1905. Since then a small minority of culture historians have adopted the theory, among them the very active and very capable group of Viennese ethnologists at whose head stands Father Wilhelm Schmidt. His own formulation of the theory agrees in its principles and main conclusions with that of Graebner, but differs in its conclusions in a number of important details. The conclusions arrived at by the different exponents of the Kulturkreis theory have failed to gain the acceptance of the great majority of anthropologists, although there is considerable agreement in anthropological circles upon most of the principles underlying the theory. Criticism has chiefly centered upon what most culture anthropologists consider a much too reckless and incautious application of the principles to the facts we possess.

The present writer cannot see his way clear to the acceptance of culture stratification as elaborated either by the Berlin or by the Viennese school. The cultural facts for the American continent, North America particularly, but also South America, cannot, he feels, be reconciled with the demands of the theory, and until or unless the American facts are reconciled with the theory, the theory cannot lay claim to providing a world stratification of cultures. As to how far the African, Asiatic, and Oceanian data bear out the conclusions arrived at by the exponents of the Culture Cycle theory, very few culture anthropologists on either side of the Atlantic are in a position to form a confident independent judgment based upon a thorough first-hand study of all the pertinent facts, and the present writer can lay no claim to being one of these few. The cultural facts are so bewilderingly multitudinous and so endlessly tangled, our knowledge of many areas is so fragmentary, the problems of interpretation are so delicate, and the risks of reading into the facts what is not there are so great and so difficult to avoid, that many decades may pass before a final and definitive conclusion upon the validity of the theory's conclusions, even for the areas outside America, can be reached. Meanwhile, the better and more hopeful way would seem to be in the intensive study of smaller areas and in the postponement of more ambitious world-syntheses until our intensive regional studies have sufficiently accumulated to justify a more comprehensive reconstruction of the course of world culture. *Chi va piano va sano.*

Even the much less ambitious and much looser time scale and stratification proposed in the present paper would be looked upon as too incautious by not a few anthropologists. The detailed factual evidence for such validity as the writer feels it possesses will be offered in a later paper. Most anthropologists would however probably agree with the theory here proposed, at least along its

broader lines, provided, again, that the application of its two major principles be carried out with the utmost caution, wariness, and objectivity.

Thus far we have been occupied with defining our terms, dividing the phenomena, outlining their distribution over the world, and suggesting a technique for reconstructing stratification and time perspective from regional distribution. We shall now proceed to a discussion of the prevalent theories regarding the origin and early history of religion and magic and to a reconstruction of this history in the light of the technique suggested.

The prevalent and formerly prevalent theories of the origin and early history of religion and magic are legion. For the sake of brevity, we shall group them into two great classes, which may be called respectively 'degeneration' theories and 'progression' theories.

The degeneration theories assume or have assumed that the history of religion has been a sort of degeneration or devolution from an early pure and exclusive monotheism. The concept of God became later broken up into concepts of gods, and these in turn later into lesser spirits, manism and magic meanwhile appearing on the scene and growing apace. No single name or school stands out as sponsor for the degeneration theories, and the theories themselves are usually not worked out in any detail. Perhaps it would be more exact to call these theories tendencies—tendencies to describe the broad course of prehistoric, protohistoric, and early historic religion as one dominantly characterized by successive and increasing departure from earlier and exclusive ethical monotheism.

The progression theories assume or have assumed that the history of superhumanism has been, on the contrary, in the main a sort of progress or evolution from an earlier or original magic, manism, or animism, up along polytheistic or other routes, to monotheism. Some of the theories start out from manism, some from animism, some from magic, and others still from "totemism" and so forth. They have this however in common, that they tend to present the broad lines of development as beginning with "superstitions," and frequently pretty crass ones, and as leading up through successive stages to monotheism or beyond. In many of these theories the successive stages are quite elaborately worked out.

In the degeneration theories, monotheism came first, a monotheism without accompanying superstitions. These latter came upon the scene at later periods, usually as corruptions of the earlier monotheism. In the progression theories, the superstitions—magic, or manism, or animism, or a combination of them—came first, superstitions without accompanying theism or monotheism. This latter came upon the scene at a much later period, usually as a refinement of the earlier superstitions. The process in the first case may be roughly described as analytic, in the second case as synthetic.

This broad characterization of the two contrasting types of theories incurs the risk of oversimplifying the facts or of lopping off some of them to make the facts fit the formula. This risk is common to most sharp-cut generalizations

on complex masses of factual data. It is one we have had to take more than once during the course of the present short paper. The reader is asked to make allowance for the necessity we are under of avoiding too many confusing details and of keeping the discussion within the space limits of a brief article. For the rest, the broad characterization given of the two types of theories is sufficiently precise for our present purpose.

Each of the more important degeneration and progression theories has contributed something of value to the sum-total of our knowledge of the forces and processes that have been at work in the historic and prehistoric development of religion and magic. Each has called attention to one or more of the many forces and processes that have seemingly influenced the development of this highly complicated department of human culture. But no one of the theories has given us either a scientific demonstration of real origins or a master key to the course of subsequent development. Each of the theories that has attempted to do so has run afoul of swarms of facts that are irreconcilable with the theory. In the following pages, instead of undertaking a detailed criticism of each of the chief degeneration and progression theories, we shall confine our attention to summarizing briefly the main weaknesses of method that underlie all or most of them, and shall then propose, on the basis of our facts of distribution and of our two key principles of interpretation, a tentative reconstruction of the broad lines of religious and magical development since the earliest prehistoric period to which our evidence reaches. Of origins proper, cultural anthropology has little to say that is worth saying.

The fundamental weaknesses in method that have accompanied the formulation of so many, and seemingly all or nearly all, the degeneration and progression theories are in a sense reducible to one, namely, reliance on subjective surmise rather than upon objective facts. There has been a marked tendency to select more or less arbitrarily certain sections of the evidence at hand and to build theories upon this fraction of the evidence instead of upon all the evidence. A practice closely akin to this one, and one nearly as widespread, has been that of first excogitating a theory of how the origin and development of supernaturalism may conceivably have taken place, and then searching the ethnological Jerusalem with lamps to gather up such facts and only such facts as seemed to bear out the already assumed theory.

Further, there has been little serious effort on the part of the proponents and exponents of the degeneration and progression theories to distinguish between the different levels of culture found in the uncivilized world. Liberal use has been made by some schools of the Australian data, on the very questionable assumption that Australian culture is the most primitive we know, but, generally speaking, apart from this exception, the supernaturalistic culture of the uncivilized or preliterate peoples has been drawn upon with little or no regard for the great differences in general cultural pattern and background from people to people and the equally great differences in level of cultural advance and attainment. Facts have been picked from here, there, and everywhere

over the habitable globe, and lumped together without rhyme or reason. The theme of this paragraph could be expanded for pages, but enough has probably been said for our present purpose.

There is nothing particularly novel about the above criticisms. They have been made time and again. They are, moreover, pretty generally admitted on all sides by anthropologists, and the lessons they suggest have been an integral and highly important factor in bringing about the cautious and rigidly objective attitude that at present characterizes the great bulk of cultural anthropologists. Most of them put little store by the older ambitious and abortive theories that attempted to account for the origin and early development of superhumanism in its various phases. Adventurous dogmatism has given place to an almost timid agnosticism.

Let us turn from the uncongenial task of criticism to the more difficult but more congenial labor of construction. In attempting a rough reconstruction of the course of prehistoric religious and magical development, we must at once distinguish sharply between origins proper and early prehistoric development. Anthropology knows nothing of ultimate religious origins proper. At most it can suggest some plausible or probable hypotheses. It can, however, speak with a little more confidence upon the conditions that prevailed at a very remote period of prehistory and upon some of the broader lines of development since then.

The facts of distribution as interpreted in the light of our two principles point strongly to the conclusion that at the remotest period back to which we can reach, magic, manism, animism, and theism were already well established in the culture of the race. Each of these four phases of superhumanism is universal or widespread among the marginal peoples of the world. Hence, if we accept our two principles of interpretation, all four phases date back beyond the recent prehistoric to the remote prehistoric.

Both the degeneration and the progression theories assume that either theism or the superstitions are of recent origin, or at least that the one preceded the other in time. The objective facts lend no support to either assumption, and so far as they go are not easily reconcilable therewith. We have no objective anthropological grounds for placing either theism or the superstitions as prior in time to the other. The moment we attempt to do so, we depart from the only objective evidence we have, and substitute therefor a conjectural subjective criterion. In a word, we substitute "hunches" for factual proofs. This is an invigorating indoor sport, but it is not science. We depart still farther from our objective facts, if we hold, as the degeneration and progressions theories usually hold, not only that theism *preceded* the superstitions or vice versa, but also that theism *evolved out* of the superstitions or that the superstitions *evolved out* of theism. To this further point we shall return later.

On the broad lines of development of religious and magical culture since remote prehistoric times some interesting light appears to be thrown by the differential distribution of theism and the superstitions among the marginal

and intramarginal peoples. Among the marginal peoples, as we have seen, magic, manism, and animism are not wanting, but as a rule they are but moderately or scantily developed, existing in a great many of these peoples merely in traces. As we pass, however, to the intramarginal peoples, we step into a world wherein magic, and manism, and animism run riot, wherein they appear in endless luxuriance and complexity, and wherein, too, theism is, more often than not, either lacking entirely or else functioning very feebly.

These facts interpreted in the light of our principles give us rather strong objective grounds for concluding that the passage of peoples from the earlier lower hunting level to the later gardening, herding or higher hunting level has normally been followed over most of the world and perhaps all of it by a markedly disproportionate growth of superstitions, and that the rank exuberance of magic, manism and animism that we so commonly find today among the intramarginal peoples took its rise not in earlier prehistoric times but only in later prehistoric times. There is also some ground for concluding—but the point cannot be urged too confidently in the present state of our evidence—that a good many of the distant, uninterested, “otiose” Supreme Deities of modern intramarginal peoples may well be “degenerations” of earlier more actively functioning deities, whose cult perhaps became obsolete or obsolescent as magic, manism, and animism grew apace and crowded theism to the wall.

In general, it would seem that the farther we go back into the prehistoric past, the less do we find of magic, manism, and animism. They do not disappear, but they are simpler, less exuberant, less complex, as we pass from more recent to more remote prehistoric days. We do not, on the other hand, find any such definite thinning out and attenuation of theism as we go farther back. It is as much in evidence among the marginal peoples as among the intramarginal ones, and perhaps more so. In any event, it is *relatively* more in evidence, as it is less overshadowed and eclipsed among the marginals by its rivals, magic, manism and animism, that are so much less vigorously developed among the marginal as compared with the intramarginal peoples.

The conclusion that superstitions were more prominent and theism at least relatively less prominent in later than in earlier prehistoric culture is not utterly irreconcilable with the demands of the progression theories, but it is hardly what we should expect were these theories valid. We should expect to find theism emerging into gradually greater clearness and prominence. Instead, we find theism somewhat on the wane with the superstitions waxing strong.

On the other hand, the above conclusion does not buttress the main contentions of the degeneration theories. The facts do, it is true, point to a very appreciably more luxuriant growth of superstitions in recent prehistoric culture as compared with earlier prehistoric culture, a growth that constitutes to this extent a marked degeneration. But that is about all.

It might indeed be plausibly argued that, inasmuch as theism remains constant or appears even to increase somewhat in importance while superstitions appear to dwindle in importance as we go downward from intramarginal to

marginal culture and backward from more recent to earlier prehistoric days, there is some justification for inferring that if we could penetrate far enough back we should reach a period when superstitions would dwindle to the vanishing point while theism or monotheism would stand supreme and alone. Maybe. There is nothing in our evidence to prohibit such an inference. But the inference, made from the anthropological evidence, while neither illogical nor in conflict with the facts, is nevertheless an extremely long and hazardous leap, one that carries the inferrer very far indeed beyond his facts or legitimate interpretations thereof. We have constantly to keep in mind the rigid limitations of cultural anthropology in the present state of the factual evidence.

We have to emphasize, at the risk of repetition, that, while the science of culture history can give us some insight into prehistoric culture and carry us a considerable distance back into the prehistoric past, it cannot throw much light upon the ultimate origins of such major culture phenomena as religion and magic and it falls short by nobody knows how many millenia of reaching back to the very beginning of the race. We have good ethnological and archeological grounds for the view that the marginal peoples on whose culture we must build a good deal of our prehistoric reconstruction are remarkably stable, conservative, and unchanging, but this does not imply that they and their ancestors back to the beginning have not changed their culture at all. We have a certain amount of definite evidence that they have changed in some respects, quite apart from recent white European influence, and there can be little reasonable doubt but that they have changed quite considerably during the many thousands of years that have elapsed since the race began. Many very profound shiftings and reshiftings could have occurred during that long period back of what we have called the remote prehistoric. This period looms up today to the anthropologist as a great question mark, and one that, so far as we can forecast, will for many a tomorrow remain a question mark.

It is for these and other reasons that contemporary anthropologists are usually very chary of proposing theories of ultimate origins of such fundamental culture complexes as religion and magic. Some of their confrères in the social and psychological sciences who are not intimately familiar with the complexity of anthropological facts and with the hazards of reconstruction technique, still venture on ambitious theories of major origins. They blithely rush in where, if not angels, at least cautious anthropologists, fear to tread. It is from these non-anthropological quarters that most of the more recent theories of major origins hail.

So far then as the ultimate *origins* of religion and magic are concerned, about all that cultural anthropology can offer without taking its feet from the solid earth of facts is a series of more or less probable or plausible inferences. Some of the more important of these inferences are the following:

First, the phenomena of magic, manism, animism, and theism, although sharing in common certain features, differ so profoundly in so many other respects, that we seem obliged or at least strongly persuaded to conclude that

each has had its own separate origin. It appears increasingly more probable that to no one of these traits can be legitimately traced all the traits of superhumanism, and that, furthermore, back of each of these traits lie very complex psychic and social forces or causes.

Secondly, the prehistory and history of superhumanism, as it is shaping up before our eyes at present, appears, not so much as a degenerative devolution or as a progressive evolution of one major element from the other, but rather as a *parallel* growth of all the four or five elements, each element pushing its way up of its own inner vital force, like so many trees in a forest each reaching upward toward its place in the sun.

Thirdly, while such independent parallel development of the several elements of magic, manism, animism, polytheism, and theism stands out prominently, yet there has been a vast amount of interweaving and interblending, of cross-breeding and cross-grafting between the various elements. The magical attitude of compulsion spills over into the fields of manism and animism. Ghosts and spirits become confused and blended. Here and there we get pretty clear though sporadic glimpses of ancestors or lesser spirits rising from the ranks and qualifying as gods, or of Supreme-Being agents or attributes splitting off and assuming independent status as demi-urges or polytheistic gods.

The present paper has been written solely to outline the anthropological facts. The theological problems connected with the origin of religion are discussed in detail in readily accessible manuals. The writer is not infrequently asked: What bearing have the anthropological facts upon the question of the primitive revelation of monotheism? The briefest answer to the question would be: Negatively, much; positively, not so much.

On the negative side, we can safely say that there is no anthropological evidence that in any sense militates against belief in primitive revelation. Theories claiming to offer such evidence are, in so far as woven, not of facts, but of the things that dreams are made of.

On the positive side, we cannot with scientific prudence appeal to the anthropological evidence as proving primitive revelation, for the simple reason that anthropology does not claim to go back to the beginning of the race and to reconstruct primeval religious conditions. The evidence does show that high religious thinking may and often does go hand in hand with very simple living, that the lowliest marginal nomads are quite capable of lofty religious concepts, and that man at the earliest period back to which our evidence can carry us already had a fairly clear theism. That, however, the actual theism we find among the marginal peoples has come down in unbroken descent from primitively revealed monotheism can be neither proven nor disproven. Such revelation, it can always be objected, may later have become obscured and lost, while on the other hand the human mind, savage or civilized, can, unaided by revelation, arrive at a knowledge of God.

J. M. C.

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RELIGION AND MAGIC AMONG CASS LAKE OJIBWA

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THE following data were gathered during the course of a short visit this summer (1929) to the Indians of Cass Lake, Minnesota. Some of the information was obtained from my friend, Mrs. Fairbanks, an Indian woman, and her husband. Both of them are natives of Minnesota. Mr. Fairbanks formerly lived at Lake Winnebegosh, near Bina, at Raven's Point. His grandfather kept a trading post. His father, who is now sixty-nine years old, used to take the family every year to Squaw Lake where they hunted during the winter months. Each year he would build a new cabin there, with fire and chimney in the center of it.

From the Fairbanks home we drove out into the country to Mrs. Fairbanks' parents. We found them at a camping place where the Indians were holding their annual dance and powwow, which began August 19th and lasted three days. This is the only time during the year when the Indians all come together. The different families leave their farms and pitch their tents around the dancing place. We found the older men there very willing to give us the information we desired. Mrs. Fairbanks acted as interpreter. After the powwow was over, all the Indians departed, as the rice season was on and wild rice forms one of their chief food staples.

Information was sought only upon a few selected points, chiefly concerning some of the religious and magical practices known to be widely distributed east and north of the Minnesota area. No attempt was of course made to cover the field with thoroughness. These brief notes may, however, help a bit toward plotting out distributions of the culture traits concerned. The exact wording of my informants and interpreter is adhered to in the following pages as closely as possible.

Before an Indian partook of food, after the death of one of the members of his family, he used to throw a piece of meat or other food into the fire, as a sign of mourning. This was done at every meal and for as long a period as the person wished. Mrs. Fairbanks, Jr., said she remembered throwing bread on the fire for the spirits of the departed.

A somewhat similar observance was the following. The first wild rice which was grown was thrown into the water or in a clean place in the woods, likewise for the departed. Just a spoonful would be so thrown. When this was done, the rice could be eaten by the living survivors. When a deer was killed, the first bit was thrown away or thrown into the fire, and for the same purpose.

The Indians practiced and still practice blood-letting in illness of any kind. Mrs. Fairbanks, Sr., had rheumatism, and still has it so badly she can hardly walk, and she had some of her blood removed twice. She said she was greatly relieved thereby as her blood was too thick. David Boyd, the so-called chief (they have no real chief now), called Little Buck, showed me where a vein in his forearm had been opened. Not everyone is allowed to perform this operation, but only those who are told in a dream that they can do so. Mrs. Fairbanks, Sr., has a woman neighbor who performs the operation. The vein opened is near the elbow on the under side of the forearm. It is opened with a flint or knife. The knife is burnt first to sterilize it. The blood is allowed to run into a basin, as much of it as one wishes to lose. Then ashes are put over the wound to cauterize it. Little Buck had fallen off a horse and was badly injured. Blood-letting was resorted to and he believes he was cured by it.

The sweat lodge used was made of four sticks tied together at the top with basswood bark, thus making a semispherical lodge. The framework was covered with blankets or mats. The poles or sticks used for the framework were of birch or willow or other wood that bends easily. The stones were first heated and were then placed in the center of the lodge, and water was poured over them to produce steam. The lodge was used only by the men. Sometimes several men would use it at a time. The lodge was especially used on very warm days. Skins and so forth were employed for rubbing the body after the steam bath.

Some details were obtained on the familiar Algonkian beings, *Memegwecio* and *Pagak*. The *memegwecio* is a living being with human form, and can talk. It goes into the water and comes out of the earth, like a fairy or merman. These beings are not of any use to anybody. The Indians see them. They have small boats, and will never look at human beings when the latter are around. They steal both nets and their contents from the Indians. Little Buck informed me that at Bemidji River a man shot at a pelican, and these little people grabbed the pelican. Little Buck and the other Indians chased them to the other end of the lake, but just as the Indians were closing in on them, the *memegwecio* beings disappeared. After their disappearance, the Indians heard a voice saying: "My son, give up what you took from the Indians." The Indians were still in their

boats on the lake, and soon the pelican came from the water, dead, as it had been shot by the Indians, and the Indians took it home.

Pagak, the skeleton being, has the form of a human skeleton. He can be heard flying around, as his bones rattle, and the Indians even see him. He hollows four distinct times: first in the beginning of his flight, then again, and third time, and a last time at the close of his flight. He comes from the east and goes toward the west. If a person who hears him is at the time sickly and weak, and faints or falls upon hearing him, the person will die soon. People who are to live long are not affected by him.

Pagak has the power of throwing a fog when he hollows, and then flies over this fog in his flight. Pagak has special songs which he sings. The medicine man, who until recently lived at Cass Lake, learned these songs from Pagak. Before this medicine man died, the present medicine man paid him to learn them from him, and so the present medicine man must be paid to sing them now, so he told me. He then went over to his tent and began to drum and to sing the songs.

All in all, Pagak is a good spirit. His origin is as follows: An Indian was lost in the woods, and then when lost hollowed once, then again, and a third time, and is still hollowing, thus making four times.

The following are a few types of magical procedure upon which some information was obtained:

The Indians believed that a certain stone would cure the sick. The person who owned this stone placed a pole near it. A string led up to the end of the pole, on which were placed feathers of different colors. The sick were brought to this stone and cured. To obtain this favor, they brought blankets, tobacco, and other gifts, and left them there. Mrs. Fairbanks, Jr., added that the one who owned the stone later took the presents left. I was also told of a particular kind of stone which is sometimes found on the lake shore. It has the form of a human head on it. It is called *shingabwasin*. I could not learn that it was made use of in any way, nor whether it had any relation to the above-mentioned healing stone.

Inside the rabbit, between the skin and the flesh, is often found a little rabbit. The finding of such a foetal inclusion brings blessing to the finder. The little rabbit is passed through the rabbit snares, and so acts as a kind of decoy so that the other rabbits will enter the snare. It is a sort of magic bait. Little Buck told me he had seen these.

Infant charms were of different kinds. Small round nets made of yarn or other material were fastened to the cradle board to protect the child. A bit of the navel string of girl babies was put into a tree, so that when the baby grew up she would know how to chop wood well. The boy's navel string was placed on the hunting trail or in a bear's den, so the boy would become a good hunter. A bit of the string was also placed in a tiny cushion for the child to play with.

Two types of weather magic were the buzzer and snow man. The buzzer was made by cutting a round hollow piece of wood, through holes in which were put strings of twine or basswood bark. By pulling the strings a buzzing sound was made, and so wind was produced. When the snow was slushy, the boys used to make a snow man. This was done to bring cold weather. The Indians here had never heard of plucking a bird or throwing a rabbit skin into the fire to bring cold weather.

Medicine made of roots was carried to bring luck in hunting. The tops of small pine trees were very carefully cut off and then put on the fire, and in the smoke thereof the hunter would "wash" his hands and gun to bring good luck. Duck wings do not seem to have been hung up for good luck. Bones were thrown away, but were never burned, as far as the Indians remembered.

Scrying was apparently not used, nor did the Indians here seem to have heard of divination by the use of bear knee-caps, bear skulls, otter paws, or beaver haunch-bones. I was told the rabbit shoulder blade was placed against the fire to make cold. This explanation of the purpose of the practice was perhaps a slip of tongue or memory, and may refer to scapulimancy.

The medicine man's rattle was made of skin or birch stretched over a rim, with shot or stones inside. A stick ran clear through the rattle lengthwise, passing through the center of each end thereof. Sometimes cans with shot inside were used as rattles, and often deer hoofs were tied together and rattled.

If Indians on the trail wished to denote the direction they had taken, they would tie a bunch of leaves or straw on a pole and lean the pole or cause it to point in the direction taken. The hour of departure was denoted in the summer time by putting up a pole and pointing it toward the sun, and in winter time by drawing a circle in the snow and marking the hour upon it, as in a sundial. They seem to have had no way of denoting such things as length of stay, illness, death, luck in hunting and so forth.

My informants assured me that there was no family or individual ownership of land. The Indians just hunted anywhere, the land belonging to the tribe as such. The first one who arrived at a given place hunted there and no one interfered with him except in case there was not land enough and then several would use the same land. Today the Indians here all own their own farms which they work. They live very poorly. A few are Christians. There was formerly no established system for conserving game but the Indian hunted only according to his needs and animals were always plentiful. Some of the present-day Indians have never seen a beaver.

THE SUPREME BEING AMONG THE BANYARWANAD OF RUANDA

By RT. REV. LÉON CLASSE, WHITE FATHERS

Vicar Apostolic of Ruanda

IMANA *n'Imana yahanze byose!* "God is God and it is He who has made all things!" Thus say our Banyarwanda, a native tribe of Ruanda in central Africa.

Do not look for idols in this country as our people are out and out monotheistic and for them "nothing can be like God," let alone surpass Him. They laugh wholeheartedly when they are shown pictures of idols and when mention is made of fetichistic tribes. "Those people are of wood," they say, and with supreme contempt they blow their spittle afar, than which there is no stronger mark of disdain. For to them "Imana," God, "is stronger, more powerful than all warriors," as they say, or further, "no one is like God," "God has long arms," that is to say, is mighty. Hence the proverb: "What God has planted will not be uprooted, in spite of the most violent storms."

It is He who made man, and their good common-sense psychology has dictated the proverbial saying: "He who fashioned the hearts of men, did not make them all according to the same last." This God is good to all: "Your best friend might dig a hole to make you fall into it but God will always reserve for you a little hole by which to escape." This idea of God's goodness and mercy is so real that of a truly good man it will be said: *N'Imana mu Rwanda*, "he is like God in Ruanda."

Therefore our pagans—we cannot but call them thus—love to name their children after some quality of God and in our mountains many may be found who are called: "It is God who speaks," "It is He who makes me live," "It is God that saves," "It is He who gives," "He who is from the beginning."

The name of God is always on our Banyarwandas' tongue. "There is nothing so good as God." In any emotion, whether of joy or sadness, they exclaim: *Mana y'Irwanda!* "God of Ruanda." Their wishes for themselves or for others are couched in the following expressions: "May God be favorable to me," "May God keep you," "May God be with you." If a chief is to be placated and won over, for the proverb says: "He who is well buttered (that is, who has many cattle) will not be wanting in flatterers," he will graciously be addressed: "You who are always on good terms with God" or else "God is always on your side."

But, let us not delude ourselves, all this is very nice in "theory," but the theory is not carried out in practice. We should not complain, however; it is already quite a blessing to find such sentiments among our Banyarwanda and the missionary finds them useful in his catechetical instructions and in winning over to the true God souls that are so impregnated with lofty ideas. And they can understand. In practice, since God is essentially good, since nothing is to be feared from him is not, they argue, this worship of beautiful words suffi-

cient? They have another proverb: "God gives us, it is not a trade you make with Him." So they ask favors of Him, but nothing more. *Man iraduha*: "God give us!" Worship is confined to the sole prayer of petition. To recognize that He is good, exalted above all beings, invincible, omniscient, Providence, is not this sufficient worship? And if our good blacks offer sacrifices, it will invariably be to the spirits of their ancestors that might harm them, as they think, and that must therefore be appeased. No one will think of offering sacrifice to God: He is good and nothing therefore is to be feared from Him.

Our Banyarwanda believe in a life after death and a remuneration, reward or punishment. The punishment consists of fire, the fire of our mighty, active volcanos. In our volcanic region, earthquakes are not at all rare; when a more violent one than usual is heard, the natives will say: "The wicked are trying to force the doors of the volcano but they will not succeed." The reward granted to the virtuous consists in watching large herds on the extinct volcano "Muhabura" (nearly 14000 feet elevation). Felicity beyond comparison will be found there, consisting in drinking one's fill of milk and honey and smoking excellent tobacco. But this happiness would seem to be rather feeble as no one is in a hurry to go to these celestial pastures: *Ibyo mu Rwanda birachyalyoshye!* they say, "the attractions of Ruanda are still pleasing to me!"

THE RELIGION OF THE CENTRAL ESKIMO

RT. REV. ARSÈNE TURQUETIL, O.M.I.

Prefect Apostolic of Hudson Bay

THE whole interior of Ellesmere Land, of Baffin Land, and of the country extending from Hudson Bay northwest to the Arctic Ocean, is an immense treeless tundra. The Eskimo inhabits this whole inland area, though he is never found in forested districts. It is, therefore, inexact to describe the Eskimo as a man inhabiting the Arctic coast land exclusively and to describe his culture as one depending necessarily on the sea. The expedition of Rasmussen has verified by direct observation the information given by the missionaries upon this point and has been able to distinguish between the Eskimo of the coast, and those of the interior, or caribou eaters. The coastal and inland groups constitute but one people, the people of the northern tundra.

It is not easy to describe this tundra. In summer time the country appears somewhat undulating, with here and there little hills rounded by former glaciers. The glaciers in their movement towards the sea have left their marks upon the rocks, which they could not carry away as they have carried away whatever soil may perhaps have been there. Moraines have been deposited on all sides. Between these undulations of the land are valleys, which are transformed each spring into torrents by the melting snows, and in which no soil can keep its footing. Only here and there in the shelter of jutting rocks does one find a few dwarf willows creeping along the ground. No one of them lifts its trunk more than four or five inches above the earth.

One can hardly imagine, unless he has seen it, the aspect of this country in winter—one great immensity of snow, boundless, heaped up, hardened, carved into waves by the winds, snow that has to be cut with a knife and taken out to see if one is upon the icy surface of a lake or upon solid land. You travel for hours and for whole days without seeing a sign of life. The intense cold feels like an icy blade penetrating your flesh along the edges of your hood. You are lucky if you are not overtaken by the terrible "poudrerries," thick whirlwinds of fine snow lifted up and driven through the air by the northern blizzard.

This tundra, or desert, extends in a straight line, east to west, 3,200 miles. and has an area of 1,500,000 square miles. The average population is one human being for each 400 square miles.

Eskimo culture is eminently Arctic and gives proof of perfect adaptation of the natives to this northern tundra. The broad lines of the culture are well known: the skin tent, the snow igloo, the sleds with ice runners, the stone lamp filled with caribou or sea-mammal fat, the special windproof clothing, the waterproof boots, the light and swift kayak, the fishing and hunting implements—evidences of a rich and varied culture that corresponds to all the exigencies of life. These things are well known and need merely be mentioned.

Attention may, however, be called to the high degree of perfection attained in every detail of manufacture of these articles. Each of the objects mentioned is a masterpiece and gives us evidence of a thorough understanding of the country. Furthermore, in spite of the remarkable conservatism that characterizes the Eskimo, he knows perfectly well how to adapt himself to local necessities. For example, caribou skin and sinew are the ideal material and thread for making clothing. If, however, these are lacking, the Eskimo substitutes thick rough bear skin, fox skin, thin and easily torn hare skin, the skin of birds, sinews of seal or of any other animal. The best sole for the waterproof boots is the skin of the large ground seal, but in case this is not at hand the skin of the small seal, of the walrus, of the white whale, or of the caribou, is used. The methods of preparing the various skins of course differ entirely, and one is very much struck with the fact that the Eskimo works these substitutes not as a mere makeshift, as it were, but with the greatest care to turn out a perfect product.

This adaptation to changing circumstances is not the resultant of long gropings. It has something of the spontaneous and instinctive about it. I once saw an Eskimo who had killed two caribou a day's march from his camp. His family was suffering from hunger and it was necessary to transport the food at once. But he had no sled. So he cut a hole in the ice of a small lake nearby, dipped the skin in the water, took it out, kept on dipping it in until the fur was well saturated with water, and then, holding the skin by the head so that the water would flow along the fur, he took it out and held it upright in the air for a few minutes. The surface of the skin rapidly froze. He then gently spread the skin on the snow and left it there in the intense

cold, which within a quarter of an hour had frozen it through and through. Here was his improvised sled. One could multiply such examples indefinitely.

Here is another example. In 1912 our boat put in at Wolstenholme at the western extremity of the Strait and at the entrance of Hudson Bay. The people pointed out to us a sort of rectangular, flat-bottomed boat. The frame of the boat was made of seal, walrus or caribou bones, covered with seal skin. The sail was also seal skin. This primitive vessel belonged to a family that had just arrived. Here is the story of this family. The family was camped upon the ice hunting seals and having nothing but rifle and harpoon. Drifting with the ice they reached Mansel Island, forty miles from the mainland. The island is an absolute desert. Ammunition was soon exhausted and their rifle became useless. Needles, spears and fishhooks soon gave out, too. Naturally they had no matches. The hunter adapted himself to this new environment by returning to the age of stone. Flint and cut bones sufficed for him. Thus he passed ten years all alone looking out unaided for himself and his family, which increased as the years went on. Finally he dreamed of returning to his country, and out of the bones and antlers of game taken he built his boat, and picking a day when the wind was good he returned like a true revenant to have himself reinscribed upon the list of the hunters.

All this is for an Eskimo something perfectly natural. Power of observation, facility in adapting himself to the environment, ingenuity and energy in the struggle for life—all is his. And this is the Eskimo in his Arctic culture.

The Eskimo cannot live in the northern tundra, at least in the interior, without scattering in small wandering groups. I know of only one locality, this upon the banks of the Kazan, where there is a permanent village. At this spot there is an abundance of caribou and of fish and we find there a small permanent village of about twenty families.

These little nomad groups split up until the bands are reduced to two families, at the most, living together. The exclusively coastal Eskimo can and must gather together, at least at certain periods, and form groups of ten, fifteen or twenty families. Seal and walrus hunting are thus made easier. When, however, autumn comes, they separate again and scatter in all directions.

Two laws sum up and govern this extremely simple social régime. The first is that each group must be fully sufficient unto itself without depending on the others. Furthermore, each member has to take his part in contributing toward the common welfare. Everything is in common. If one of the hunters has to undertake a journey, he must have with him a seamstress to take care of his clothes. If his own wife cannot take the trip with him, the wife of his companion will go with him. Thus there comes about a certain communism even in wives, not through passion, but through necessity.

The second law is that the small group cannot undertake the responsibility of aiding the others. And from this arise indifference, egoism, suspicion, hatred (at least between tribe and tribe), duels, murders, and inherited vendettas. However, in times of abundance everyone is welcome and hospitality

is a thing that is sacred. It would seem that inland the hunter would find more game as the population is less dense. But the game is nomadic and if it is lacking in one place the hunter has to travel hundreds of miles before finding a more fortunate relative or friend who can help him out a little.

Let us now take a look at the social and religious life of the Eskimo. At the time of childbirth the mother has to have her own separate hut. If the infant is born in an igloo or tent inhabited by the family—a thing which does not happen, except unexpectedly—it becomes necessary to abandon the habitation. After birth, the mother is isolated for a month if the infant is a boy and for two months if it is a girl. The eighth day after birth there takes place the ceremony, conducted by the medicine man, of consecrating the infant to a protective spirit and then giving the child a name.

The name! For the Eskimo this means everything. If the infant dies before it is given a name, there is no mourning. If it is a girl of which they wish to rid themselves, they smother it before the eighth day, but to smother it after it has received its name would be looked upon as a real murder which would call for vengeance.

The name given an infant is that of a deceased relative. If a small boy receives the name of his grandmother, his father will address him as mother, his mother will address him as mother-in-law, his brothers and sisters will call him grandmother, and he himself so soon as he begins to talk well at four or five years of age will address them as my son, my daughter, and so forth. The Eskimo does not, however, believe in metempsychosis, in a real reincarnation of the soul. But, he says, the dead person lives again through his name (*le mort revit par son nom*). He is glad to see his name preserved among his own people, and these in turn are glad to perpetuate the name of their ancestor whom they loved. It is only the names of the wicked that are blotted out forever. Such a mentality is certainly a very human one.

After the giving of the name comes betrothal, a commercial contract. Part of the price agreed upon is paid at once; the balance will be paid when the two who are betrothed reach maturity.

It should be further noted that female infanticide is practiced only among the very small isolated groups, where no one can learn of the birth of the infant or ask for the female infant in marriage. Consequently the smaller the population, the greater is the danger of extinction. On the other hand, one will find the grown-up men buying and paying in advance for an expected infant, under the condition that it will be a girl, with the intention of making her his wife later. For, in many places, female infanticide has led to a scarcity of women. Among the Netchiliks, there were recently one hundred and thirty-eight boys and only sixty-six girls, and even today at Cape Eskimo the missionaries are in touch with forty families among whom there are twenty grown-up young men who are not able to find wives anywhere. Thus there come polyandry, fighting, and also, unfortunately, murder followed by blood revenge.

The education of the infant is very simple. He does whatever he pleases. Nobody commands him and nobody scolds him. But the native folklore and traditions are taught him under the form of wonder stories that become encrusted, as it were, on his soul, and make of him a true Eskimo.

I do not know of any special puberty rites. The young girl merely puts on the clothing of a mature woman, with the long hood at the back, and then is joined in union with the man whom she has been accustomed from infancy to consider as her husband. She is so attached to him that in case her future husband is absent the young girl resists, often to blows, any violence which libertines might attempt. There is certainly here a touch of modesty, of natural probity that is interesting to note.

Polygyny and polyandry are permitted, but cases of them are rather rare. Monogamy prevails. Divorce is permitted. I have seen cases of forced divorce, commanded by the medicine man. Sometimes an individual covets his neighbor's wife and is not willing to share her in a polyandrous union. Then there takes place a wrestling match for the possession of the woman. The woman belongs to the victor. In case of divorce, a child too young to hunt remains with its mother. Marriage does not occur between blood kin, cousins, uncle and niece, aunt and nephew. I have come across a case of an Eskimo who had at the same time two sisters as his wives. Ordinarily, however, affinity is in itself an impediment to marriage.

The treatment of illness is exclusively the task of the medicine man. Medicinal herbs are unknown as vegetation is lacking. Surgery, however, is very much in honor. Cutting, opening, lancing abscesses and tumors of all kinds, even the most deep seated, without sterilization of instruments and without anesthetics, antiseptics, dressings or bandages, are all matters of common usage. It is the medicine man's job to discover what fault has aroused the anger of such or such a spirit and so caused the sickness. Having discovered this, he prescribes nothing but proscribes much. The life of the Eskimo is honeycombed with these prohibitions or taboos, a great number of which take their rise in the treatment of disease.

At death we see the reappearance of the idea which prevails at birth. The sick man must not breathe his last in the tent or igloo that he inhabits. If this happens, in spite of what everybody can do to prevent it, it becomes necessary to abandon the hut. There is a taboo against touching the corpse. The whole family and, in fact, the whole tribe, must fast for twenty-four hours after first receiving news of the death of one of its members.

Folklore is a powerful influence making for unity of view and observance as well as for conservatism. It reveals to us also the soul of a people. Eskimo folklore gives us such an insight into the Eskimo solution of the problem of life.

The thing that stands out first and foremost in their folklore is their anxiety to be successful hunters.

Once upon a time, the story will run, there was a hunter who never came back empty-handed. They then describe in minute detail his hut filled with meat, and all the members of his family as big, fat, dressed in beautiful new skins, happy in an igloo where the lamp never went out and where the song of the *Yayaya* ever witnessed to everyone's happiness. This is the zenith of contentment.

And here is the antithesis. Once upon a time there was a hunter who never had any luck in the chase. His igloo was dark and chilly. There was no oil or fat for his lamp. Hunger tormented his ragged children, for there was nothing to eat. One heard nothing but the cry, "I am hungry. I am hungry." This is the nadir of misery.

Such themes speak eloquently to the child. The ambition and desire to become a good hunter is born within him and grows apace as each evening he falls asleep, his imagination filled with these marvelous stories that his grandmother tells to the family before the family gets ready for bed. The next morning on awakening he will ask his grandmother: "Grandmother, what happened to that hunter of whom you were talking last night?" "My child, that hunter observed faithfully all the ordinances, usages and customs established by the spirits of the sea, and so he lacked nothing, and nothing could hurt him." And then the good old woman will explain in detail the observances that have to do with birth, with the hunt, with death, and so forth. The child drinks in these instructions from the first awakening of his imagination. He determines to be a real Eskimo.

The same theme is brought home just as eloquently to the girl, who dreams of a husband who will be a good hunter. She sees his tent and igloo full of comforts and of happiness. How pleasant it will be for her to hear the happy cries of her children enjoying life. And on the other hand, how she will shrink from the thought of being united to a hunter who is unskillful, unlucky, sick, powerless, or too old.

In the second place, the Eskimo folklore gives us an insight into the native's concern for the interests of his soul. Religion may appear as if relegated to the second place and as if bound to the service of material interests. But we must not conclude that it is for the Eskimo a luxury, a matter of phantasy or of simple opportunism. It is an integral part of that ensemble of impressions, ideas and points of view which make up Eskimo mentality.

The pagan Eskimo believes firmly in the immortality of the soul and in a moral sanction in the other life. No doubt, absorbed as he is entirely by his preoccupations as a hunter and deprived of supernatural light, the Eskimo thinks of his future life as a material paradise abounding in the choicest game, and one where success in hunting is assured without work. This dream of the future life is explained by the environment in which the Eskimo lives. His hell, too, is a material one, a land of desolation and of famine, without food or raiment or lamp, where he is forever engaged in the Tantalus-like pursuit of

game which he can never take or overtake. In this there is a real idea of a sanction, but the question remains: Have we to do here with *moral* good and evil?

It should be said at once that starting out, as the Eskimo does, from a material point of view, he develops this point of view with a rigorous logic and concludes that those will go to the paradise of abundant game whose life has been lived in conformity with the pleasures of the two goddesses of land game and of sea game.

Now he who here below is a good hunter evidently is in the good graces of these divinities. Success in the hunt is therefore the sign of a good life, just as lack of success is the proof of a moral disorder, and this even from the religious point of view. For religion is nothing but the totality of man's relations with the deity, and the object of the acts of religion is to please the deity and to conduct oneself in accordance with the deity's pleasure. Thus, though starting out from a false principle, the Eskimo follows his reasoning to guide his hunting in accordance with the will of his god.

Success in the chase does not always come even to the best hunter. He then concludes that he has committed some fault which has displeased the deity or else that evil spirits have interfered, for the Eskimo admits the double principle of good and evil. Thus the purpose of the acts of religion is to propitiate good spirits, to obtain their protection, and to keep at bay these evil spirits. Thus the deity is not inaccessible—the sorcerer is famous for his voyages to the moon and to the bottom of the sea. The deity is even coercible—he can be forced to act by formulas, by sacred rites, by fetiches and by amulets. Fetiches and amulets act homeopathically. Carrying a rabbit paw gives rapidity of movement, possession of a fox nose assures good smelling ability and guides one surely towards game, and so forth.

The evil spirit is also accessible but only through the aid of the protecting spirit, and instead of being propitiated or conciliated, he is fought with, he is forced to beat a retreat, he is even killed. I have said "through the aid of the protecting spirit." The good principle is therefore superior to the evil one.

The functions of the sorcerers are: to see that the usages and customs established by the deity are faithfully observed; to prevent or to discover faults, that is, breaches of these regulations, and to assure expiation of these breaches through confession and penance; to interpret omens, auguries, and extraordinary natural happenings, such as thunder; to discover sacred spots, and so forth; to prevent evil spirits from approaching the camp, or, if they have already done so in spite of everybody, to force them to go away.

I may add that among the magicians there are men who stab themselves with knives, shoot themselves with guns, die and come to life again in an instant without any sign of wounds. Among the more primitive inland Eskimo, the sorcerer is chosen to act in the name of the tribe and enjoys very great authority. Even if he is a child he takes precedence over the oldest men at the feasts and at the semi-religious dances he wears tonsure and girdle;

his word is law. He can, however, resign whenever he wishes. The sorcerer sometimes makes evil use of his art and then we have black magic. He makes a sort of monster with the head of a bear, with the body of a wolf, with the wings of birds, with the tails of fish, and so forth, gives life to this formidable being, and launches it in pursuit of his enemy, who will then infallibly succumb.

Add to sorcery certain phallic rites, ritual promiscuity and you have the broad lines of Eskimo religion.

Just one further point may be added.

I have often been asked the question "Has the pagan Eskimo an idea, at least a vague idea, of the true God, creator and sovereign master of all things and essentially good?" I am not able to give a direct response to this question. But I shall never forget the impression made upon me by what an Eskimo woman, still a pagan, said to me at the end of a course given her in the catechism. "I have never doubted," she said, "that there was a good God. Twice, in the excess of my suffering I had cried with all my strength 'there must somehow be someone who does not do evil. Where is he? May that One hear me.' I thought of a powerful spirit, more powerful than the others, but good. I loved him without knowing who he was. I seemed to see him, I had such need of him." Who will venture to say that this woman was the only one whose natural reason has thus guided her up toward the good God?

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